



RECREATIONAL RIVER NEBRASKA/SOUTH DAKOTA

Two reaches of the Missouri River along the Nebraska/South Dakota border are protected as segments of the nation's Wild and Scenic River System. The reach set aside in 1978 from Gavins Point Dam near Yankton, South Dakota, to the vicinity of Ponca State Park, Nebraska, still exhibits the river's dynamic character in its islands, bars, and chutes. The reach set aside in 1991 from Fort Randall Dam near Pickstown, South Dakota, to the vicinity of Running Water, South Dakota, represents the natural landscape of the Missouri during pre-settlement days. Included in this upper reach are the lower twenty miles of the Niobrara River and the lower eight miles of Verdigre Creek. In the varied reaches, native floodplain forests, tall and mixed grass prairie remnants, and the rivers and tributaries themselves provide habitat for several endangered and threatened bird and fish species.

Both Nebraska and South Dakota feature a Lewis and Clark State Recreation Area along the respective shores of the scenic Lewis and Clark Lake. Both state parks combine to form one of the region's most popular visitor attractions. Each recreation area has campsites for RVs and tents (fees apply), public beaches, trails, easy access to boating and fishing, lots of space for picnicking, plenty of wildlife viewing opportunities, and a full-service marina. Entrance and user fees are collected at both state recreation areas. For more information on the South Dakota side, call 605-668-2985; for more information on the Nebraska side, call 402-388-4169.

VISITATION

The unit is accessible year-round, depending on the weather.

ADDRESS/TELEPHONE NUMBER

Missouri National Recreational River
PO Box 666
Yankton, SD 57078
402-667-5530

or

Headquarters Office
Missouri National Recreational River
PO Box 591
O'Neill, NE 68763

WWW ADDRESS and EMAIL:

www.nps.gov/mnrr
mnrr_administration@nps.gov
george_berndt@nps.gov

Summer temperatures vary from the 70s to 90s with occasional thunderstorms. Boating and sightseeing in the spring and fall are popular and pleasant on frequent warm days.

DIRECTIONS:

Local roads in northeastern Nebraska and southeastern South Dakota paralleling or ending at the river provide the only immediate accesses.

TRANSPORTATION:

Typical access is by personal vehicle. Commercial air service is available at Yankton, South Dakota, and Sioux City, Iowa, connecting from Denver and Minneapolis. Rental car service is available at both airports.

FEES, COSTS, RATES:

Entrance and use fees are collected at Nebraska's Niobrara and Ponca state parks and at the Lewis and Clark State Recreation areas in Nebraska and South Dakota.

FACILITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

Visitor Center/Exhibits

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers operates visitor centers at the Fort Randall and Gavins Point dams that, in part, showcase the Recreational River. Public information is also available at Nebraska's Niobrara and Ponca state parks. Wayside exhibits interpreting Recreational River features and produced by the National Park Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission are installed at several river access sites, overlooks, and parks, and more are anticipated in preparation to the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

River Access, Trails:

The Recreational River is generally accessible at Corps of Engineers, state park, and county landings dotting the reaches. Local inquiry is recommended. Niobrara and Ponca state parks each features hiking, biking, and riding trails.

Programs and Activities

Niobrara State Park offers guided float trips in summer showcasing river features in the vicinity of the Niobrara-Missouri river confluence. A Missouri River outfitter provides guided canoe and sea kayak trips down the 39-mile reach between Fort Randall Dam and Niobrara, Nebraska. Contact the O'Neill office (402-336-3970) or the Yankton office (402-667-5530) for more information.

Lodging and camping

Motel accommodations are available in Wagner, Yankton, and Vermillion, South Dakota as well as in Ponca, Crofton, and Niobrara, Nebraska. Rental cabins and camping facilities are available at Niobrara and Ponca state parks, and at the

Lewis and Clark Lake.

Food and Supplies

Available in nearby towns.

Accessibility:

The state parks are generally accessible; however, please in advance to assure the availability for any special requirements. Two fishing piers for handicapped anglers available near the Gavins Point Dam. Call 402-667-5530 locations.

RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES

Spectacular river overlooks at the Chief Standing Bear Memorial Bridge near Running Water, South Dakota, and both Niobrara and Ponca state parks provide dramatic views of the Missouri River and its valley. Boating and fishing, extremely popular on both Missouri reaches and on the adjoining Lewis and Clark Lake. Canoeing is popular on upper Missouri reach. Birding is popular in the vast wetlands at the confluence of the Niobrara and Missouri rivers. Recreational activities including camping, hiking, horseback riding, and swimming are popular at the Niobrara and Ponca state parks. Various opportunities exist to explore the Lewis and Clark saga on the Recreational River, and the Lewis and Clark Visitor Center at Gavins Point Dam provides a particularly useful introduction to the story.

CONTACTS:

Missouri National Recreational River
PO Box 666
Yankton, SD 57078
402-667-5530

Niobrara State Park
PO Box 226
Niobrara, NE 68760
402-857-3373

Ponca State Park
PO Box 688
Ponca, NE 68770
402-755-2284

US Army Corps of Engineers
Lewis & Clark Visitor Center
PO Box 710
Yankton, SD 57078
402-667-7873

SOUTH DAKOTA

MISSOURI NATIONAL RECREATIONAL RIVER
39 Mile District

MISSOURI NATIONAL RECREATIONAL RIVER
59 Mile District



Lake Francis Case

PICKSTOWN

Owens Point Dam

Springfield

YANKTON

29

Vermillion

Ex Point

Lewis & Clark Lake

NIOBRARA

Verdigre

LEWIS & CLARK
VISITOR CENTER

PONCA

O'Neill

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE HEADQUARTERS
MISSOURI NATIONAL RECREATIONAL RIVER
NIOBRARA NATIONAL SCENIC RIVER

NEBRASKA

281

Fort Randall Dam

12

50

14

20